

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser comprising:

- a pulser, a laser head comprising a pair of electrodes₇ ;
- a gaseous medium comprising a mixture of CO₂ , N₂ and, optionally, H₂, adapted to be pre-conditioned/pre-ionised in the inter-electrode volume by a suitable means;

wherein said pulser comprising comprises an excitation circuit comprising

(i) means to isolate spiker and sustainer pulses; and

(ii) means to delay the spiker pulse with respect to the pre-ionising pulse,

and wherein said means to isolate the spiker and sustainer pulses and said means to delay the spiker pulse with respect to the preionising pulse, comprise a wire wound inductance connected between ground and the corresponding electrode.

2. (Original) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 1 wherein said excitation circuit comprises single switch and single high voltage d-c source.

3. (Cancelled) ~~A helium free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 1 wherein said means to isolate the spiker and sustainer pulses and said means to delay the spiker pulse with respect to the~~

~~preionising pulse, comprise a wire wound inductance connected between ground and the corresponding electrode.~~

4. (Original) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 1, comprising means to vary the peak power, duration and energy of laser pulse.

5. (Original) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 4 wherein, said means to vary the peak power, duration and energy of the laser pulse comprises means to vary the partial pressure of CO₂ in the gaseous lasing medium of N₂ and CO₂ from 10% to 90% of the total pressure.

6. (Original) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 5 wherein said means to vary the partial pressure of CO₂ comprises suitable valve means.

7. (Original) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 1, wherein said pair of electrodes is selected from profiled, cylindrical, or unprofiled electrodes with rounded off edges.

8. (Original) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 1 wherein said suitable means for preionising the said gas mixture in the inter-electrode volume comprises sparks produced between a plurality of pairs of preionising cylindrical metallic pins, positioned along the length of the said electrodes, one above the other with a uniform gap and located at an optimum distance on

either or any one side of the said electrodes at regular intervals.

9. (Original) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 1 wherein one of said pair of electrodes is semi transparent.

10. (Original) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 9 wherein means for preionising the said gas mixture in the inter-electrode volume comprises sparks produced between the semi-transparent electrode and a plurality of uniformly spaced preionising cylindrical metallic pins, positioned beneath and along the length of the said semi-transparent electrode.

11. (Currently amended) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 1 wherein the said inter-electrode volume is selected from a 1 cm³ to 200 cm³ volume range.

12. (Currently amended) A helium-free TEA CO₂ laser according to claim 1 wherein the operating efficiency on TEM₀₀ mode is about 5.2% for the Ernst profiled system ~~as described in embodiment 1~~.